The Spark

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/30470538.

Rating:
General Audiences

Archive Warning:
Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Category:
Gen

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationships:
Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Midoriya Izuku, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead/Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic

Characters:
Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Midoriya Izuku

Additional Tags:
Implied/Referenced Suicide, Bullying, Parental Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead is a Good Teacher, Anxious Midoriya Izuku, Quirkless Discrimination (My Hero Academia), Quirk Discrimination (My Hero Academia), One For All Quirk is Revealed (My Hero Academia)

Language:
English

Series:
Part 1 of Growing up Quirkless and the Problems That Comes With

Stats:
Published: 2021-04-04 Words: 5,780 Chapters: 1/1

The Spark

by ShadeCrawler

Summary

Aizawa knew that Midoriya had just as much mistrust in him as he did heart and intelligence. So that's why when Problem Child comes to him with a problem, he drops everything to make sure that it's handled properly.

Shouta remembers very clearly the first time that Izuku Midoriya went to him with a problem.

It was much later than it should've been. If Shouta had been paying attention like he should've, he would've recognized much sooner that the boy didn't trust him. Had probably never trusted him to begin with. But with the events of that school year – the USJ, the league, the possible traitor, multiple villain attacks that were all aimed towards Shouta's *kids* – it had slipped through the cracks. He should've been more attentive, noticing much sooner that his Problem Child would sooner open a vein than trust adults to handle problems for him. He should've asked himself sooner *why*. He should've done something to amend that.

But he didn't. And here he was now, sitting at his desk staring at his Problem Child who was curled into himself with his head ducked and eyes blank. Looking far too scared for a student who had come to a teacher with nothing but a request for a meeting to ask for advice with a problem they were having.

Shouta studied Midoriya for a few seconds, taking in the tilt of his chin that hid his throat, the way his arms were curved in a way that would protect his stomach and ribs, the way that his head was angled so that any attacks wouldn't make direct contact with his face. Was this body language intentional? No, Shouta realized with a sense of dread. He had seen this before, whenever he or another teacher asked Midoriya to stay behind after class or asked him a question directly. This was a learnt behaviour.

Shouta had only ever seen this type of body language from Midoriya when teachers were involved. Why?

"Of course, Midoriya," Shouta said, standing up and nodding towards the door. The rest of the kids had already filed out of the classroom, all except for Todoroki who was waiting at the door. He was watching Shouta with an expression that Shouta couldn't pin down. Nervousness? Wariness? Reluctant hope? But Shouta didn't have the time to study the expression properly before Todoroki was giving Midoriya a small nod and turning to follow the others towards the dorms. "We can talk in my office." He walked out of the classroom, Midoriya right on his heels. From the corner of his eye, he could see his student gripping the straps of his backpack tightly, the mangled fingers of his right hand tapping against the strap nervously. What was making him so nervous?

The walk from the classroom to Shouta's office was a quiet one, the only sounds being their footsteps and the *tap tap tapping* of Midoriya's fingers against his backpack. Shouta took the few minutes to piece his thoughts together. This was important. This was very important. Since he had gotten to know Izuku Midoriya, he had known that getting the kid to ask for help – and from adults especially – was like pulling teeth. The kid trusted few and out of the few that he did trust, not a one was an adult. Midoriya reaching out to an adult for help? This was big. This was something that Shouta needed to do correctly and carefully or else there was a risk of Midoriya closing himself off even tighter than before. This needed to be handled with all of the delicately that Shouta usually reserved for scared kids, animals, hostages. Midoriya was firmly in the first camp at the moment. Shouta needed to be careful and move at Midoriya's pace.

He opened up the door to his office, ushering Midoriya in before closing the door behind him. The kid had never been in his office before so Shouta wasn't surprised by how Midoriya shifted nervously, not sure where exactly to go. Shouta led him over to the couch that he kept in his office for emergency naps and nodded for the kid to sit while he grabbed the old, ugly loveseat that Hizashi had gotten him years ago and pulled it closer to the couch. He sat down and took a second to study the kid curled up on his couch, hunched over and picking at his nails. The blank look in his eyes hadn't faded. Shouta watched him for a second before deciding that his usual style of letting kids come to him wouldn't work here. Midoriya needed a nudge. "So, what can I help you with, Midoriya?"

Midoriya jerked slightly at his name, glancing up from behind his curly hair shyly before looking back down at the ground. There was a pause before Midoriya asked in a shaky, small voice, "What do I have to do to make sure that someone doesn't make it on campus?"

Shouta narrowed his eyes and leaned forward, clasping his hands together. Of all the things he had thought his Problem Child would say, that wasn't it. But it was important. And a little concerning that Problem Child was so afraid of someone that he came to a teacher with the specific purpose of keeping them off campus altogether. "A specific someone?"

Midoriya chewed on his cheek, eyes flicking up at his teacher, as if he was looking for something. Shouta could only guess that he must've found it before Midoriya shifted slightly, pulling his backpack off and opening it, pulling out a thick envelope that Shouta remembered delivering to him just a few days ago after it had made

its way through Yuuei's thorough screening process. The envelope was torn at the top and wrinkled with little indents pressed into it, like Midoriya had been gripping it tightly at one point. "I got a letter from an old classmate," Midoriya said softly, eyes stuck firmly on the envelope. "He . . . I . . . I don't want to see him." He trailed off but Shouta heard the message hidden behind the words. *Please keep him from me, Sensei.*

"May I read the letter," Shouta asked calmly, tilting his head towards the envelope. He quickly added, "You don't have to say yes. Either way, I will make sure that you don't have to see them." Persona Non Grata paperwork was a pain in the ass but a necessary one and one that Shouta would gladly take to make sure that his kids felt safe. "It would help if I knew the situation, however. So I know what to expect. Do you believe that he might show up on campus?"

"Maybe? I don't. . . I'm not sure. Maybe," Midoriya said softly, gripping the envelope tightly. He sniffled and his eyes turned shiny for a moment before the boy firmly pushed the tears back. "He. . . he. . ." Shouta's student took a shaky breath before looking up at Shouta with an expression that reminded him of the most recent box of abandoned kittens that he had found tucked under a dumpster. Small, scared, and looking for someone to trust. Someone to help them. "Sensei," he asked shakily, "if I tell you something, you won't tell anyone, will you?"

Shouta narrowed his eyes as he thought of a way to answer that question. He wished that the answer could be a simple no. It would make it easier to gain the kid's trust if it was. But it wasn't and his Problem Child deserved the truth. "I'll do my best not to. However, if what you're going to tell me is something that puts yourself or others in danger then I will have to take action and that might have to involve telling a few specific people. But I'll do so with keeping your privacy in my highest regard, Problem Child," he promised with a quiet gravity that he hoped the boy felt. "Also, I know the importance of secrets."

"Because you're an Underground hero," Midoriya said softly, a bit of awe bleeding into his expression and voice. "You'd probably have to know a lot about keeping secrets in your work. Especially considering that you work in the shadows more than the limelight heroes and your quirk depends on the initial surprise of your enemies not having access to their quirks."

Shouta's lips twitched up slightly and he felt the warm flicker of

pride in his chest. It was always nice to see his students show just how smart they could be, and Problem Child had intelligence in spades. “That’s right,” he said, tilting his head in a nod.

There was a flash of hesitance over Midoriya’s face before he said softly, “I used to want to be an Underground hero. It was the only type of heroics that I could see myself going into.”

Interesting. Shouta wouldn’t have pegged Midoriya as someone who would go into Underground heroics but the more Shouta thought of it, the more it made sense. The boy was sneaky, clever, quiet, and knew how to blend into a crowd. But it was odd, considering that with his quirk, the boy would’ve been pushed towards Limelight heroes from an early age. “Is that so,” Shouta asked, leaving the question open-ended.

Midoriya nodded, twisting his hands anxiously. “Yeah. I . . . I knew that it would be the best fit for someone like me. Plus, I . . . I liked the idea of no one knowing much about me. I want to save people with a smile, like All Might,” he hurried to explain, like his hero-worship of the man was being called into question, “but Underground heroes focus on raids, human trafficking rings, things like that. Things that a lot of Limelight heroes overlook. And I want to help *everyone*. And, um, I . . . I don’t like people seeing me. Judging me. And that’s all people did back then.” Midoriya pulled at his fingers anxiously before whispering softly, “That’s all they ever did as soon as they found out.”

Shouta leaned forward, feeling like he was just inches away from solving something, from things clicking into place. Into a clear picture where he might be able to understand what his Problem Child was going through easier. He ducked his head slightly, getting a good look at Midoriya’s face. The kid was afraid. What was he afraid of? “Found out about what,” he asked, injecting as much gentleness into the question as he could. It seemed like a century passed as he waited for Midoriya to answer the question but when he did, Shouta felt like the wind had been knocked out of him.

“Found out that I didn’t have a quirk. That I was quirkless.”

Quirkless.

There were many thoughts that ran through Shouta’s mind at the admission but the one he grabbed onto was, ‘*No fucking wonder the kid doesn’t trust anyone’*. Shouta had seen the statistics on Quirkless

people. Had read up on them from the moment that Yuuei opened its doors to the Quirkless population. It had made his stomach roll and made him remember days of walking down his own middle school halls and hearing whispers of *villain* hissed behind his back. And now, looking at Midoriya, the statistics flashed through his mind again. *Oh*, Problem Child. “You’re a late bloomer,” Shouta realized, a small spark of anger lighting in his gut. It was small now but later, when Shouta was alone, it would turn into a raging fire. Why wasn’t Shouta made aware of this? Why hadn’t it been in Midoriya’s file, it *should’ve* been in the damn file. If Shouta was right and Problem Child had been part of the 1% of Quirked people who got their quirks when they were teenagers, then there were complications. There were reasons that quirks developed that late into life and none of them were good.

Had the kid been repressing his quirk? If so then there only a handful of reasons why and trauma was right at the top of the list. Or, the most common reason, abuse. *Severe* abuse. If Shouta had been aware of Midoriya’s status as a late bloomer, he would’ve started a discrete investigation to make sure that the kid was safe. But it hadn’t been in his file. The spark flared slightly when Shouta remembered the first day of class and how he had almost expelled Problem Child. A kid with heroic potential almost gone because Shouta didn’t have all the fucking information.

Putting that aside, it was dangerous for Midoriya to be going around with only the smallest understanding of his quirk. Shouta knew that he wasn’t in Quirk counselling, something that Shouta would be *fixing*, and that meant that he was walking around with only a slim understanding of what his quirk was capable of. Midoriya was essentially a toddler, stumbling his way through learning about his quirk. Without anyone there to help him. Was anyone else aware of Midoriya’s status as a late bloomer?

Shouta remembered how close All Might was to the boy and he put that aside for now too. He had a suspicion that the man knew about it and kept the information close to his chest. He’d interrogate All Might and, if he was correct in his suspicion, rip into him later. He needed to focus on Midoriya right now, not him.

Midoriya, who was shaking his head and keeping his eyes firmly on the ground. “No,” he whispered shakily. “Quirkless. I was, *am,* Quirkless, Sensei.” He sniffled, looking up at Shouta with wide, teary eyes. “I didn’t get my quirk until I was fourteen. And it wasn’t always there. It wasn’t dormant. All Might gave it to me.”

What?

"It's my quirk," Midoriya continued like he hadn't just dropped a bomb into Shouta's lap. "It's . . . it's *mine* now. And that means that I can tell who I want." He sniffled and rubbed at his eyes weakly. "A-All Might passed his quirk onto me, just like it was p-passed onto him."

Shouta stared at him, slowly leaning back in his ugly plush chair. Pieces were clicking into place and even though it wasn't the picture he thought it was, it was one that made sense, nevertheless. The way that Yagi pulled Midoriya aside at times, the way that Yagi obviously favoured Midoriya above all the other students. The way that Yagi seemed to have a personal connection to the boy. He had a personal investment in his future. Because he had given Midoriya his quirk.

Yagi had given a fourteen-year-old child a quirk that broke his bones and then didn't tell anyone about it.

"I see," Shouta said, sounding a lot calmer than he actually felt. "Thank you for telling me this, Midoriya. It means a lot to me that you trusted me enough to come to me with this. Do you feel comfortable telling me more? It's okay if you don't. You're under no obligation to. You've told me plenty already." He would be speaking with Yagi later on and the man wouldn't have the option of staying quiet like the child in front of him. But Midoriya had already been so brave today, coming to Shouta with a problem that he needed help with and being open about his Quirkless status. Shouta felt so proud of his Problem Child. He had grown so much from the start of the year and Shouta could only imagine what the boy would be like by the time it came for him to graduate. But Midoriya had done enough. Shouta didn't want to push him farther than he had to.

But Midoriya nodded. "I want to tell you, Sensei," he said softly. "I . . . I probably should've told you before. But this is a big secret, and All Might warned me not to tell anyone. But I need to tell someone. I . . . I need help," he confessed in a whisper like it was shameful.

Shouta slowly reached out and placed a hand on Midoriya's knee, making the boy look up at him with teary eyes. "I want to help you, Problem Child," he said gently. "I'm glad that you came to me about this. Everyone needs help at times and I'm proud that you knew when you needed to reach out for help."

Midoriya smiled at him, wobbly and teary but *real.* And then he told Shouta a ghost story.

Shouta listened to every word of Midoriya's story, anger growing in his gut with every word that he said. Eight heroes before this boy, this little kid who had the weight of the world on his shoulders. And he was given the objective of coming after All Might, the Symbol of Peace who had changed the way that people viewed heroes all together. And he was meant to be the successor of the man when Midoriya wasn't even sure what type of hero he wanted to be. Shouta thought of the wistful way that Midoriya talked about Underground heroics and wondered if the boy was forcing himself to go in one direction rather than the one that he wanted because of who had come before him. A problem for another time. He would really have to speak to Yagi after this conversation to get his side of the story. Because from what Shouta was getting from Midoriya's side of the story, the boy had an absurd amount of pressure on his small shoulders and had only one person in his corner. Someone who didn't really know what he was doing at that. Shouta waited until Midoriya was done before asking, "Who else knows about this?"

"All Might.," Midoriya said softly. " Just All Might. He told me not to tell anyone else."

Yagi, you fucking *idiot.*

Shouta nodded slowly. "I see." He paused, a thought tugging at him, demanding his attention. "Midoriya, you've trusted me a lot today. And I'm grateful for that. And now I'm hoping that you'll trust me one more time because I have a question for you." Midoriya looked up at him, eyes full of tentative trust. "From the start of the year, I've been reading the relationship between you and Bakugou as that of a rivalry. That the two of your pushed each other to make each other stronger. From what I've heard here today, I'm thinking that I was wrong to believe that. Did Bakugou bully you before Yuuei, Midoriya?"

He didn't need a verbal answer. The way that Midoriya looked away and curled tighter into himself spoke volumes. But Midoriya gave him one anyway. "Yes, sensei." The boy laughed, the laugh sounding a bit like a sob. "He thought that I was looking down on him. Because I wanted to be a hero even though I'm Quirkless. Weak. Useless. A *Deku.*"

"You're not any of those things," Shouta said firmly, squeezing

Midoriya's knee gently. The spark of anger was glowing brightly at how Shouta had *missed* this, but he kept his tone calm and gentle. "Quirkless people aren't weak or useless. Quirks are a tool. They might make things easier but that's all they are. A tool. They don't make anyone worth more than any Quirkless person and I'm sorry that people have made you believe that. I will be dealing with Bakugou myself after our meeting concludes."

And thinking seriously about the boy's place in the heroics department. Any person that looked down on another for something that they couldn't control was someone who had potential, but it wasn't the heroic potential that Shouta thought the boy had. It was potential of another kind and Shouta needed to deal with it carefully. See if the boy felt any remorse for what he did. Find out what exactly he had *done*. He'd be taking a trip to Aldera Middle School soon to do some investigating which would most definitely end with the footage of the last three years being pulled. But no matter what he found, Bakugou would have to change classes. Whether that meant to Class 1-B or to General Education or leaving the school altogether. It depended on how Shouta's investigation went but he would not have the boy in his class. Separating the bully from the victim was standard procedure and it was one that Shouta would follow closely. Midoriya didn't need to deal with him any longer.

"Please don't expel him, sensei," Midoriya pleaded softly, staring up at Shouta with those big wide eyes. "Please. He's gotten better."

"But not towards you."

Midoriya winced at that and nodded. "No . . . Not towards me."

Shouta pulled away from Midoriya and leaned back in his chair. "Whether or not Bakugou is expelled is not up to you. It's up to him. His actions are his own and he needs to know that there are consequences to them. If he wants to be a hero then he can't have everything handed to him. I'll be looking into what happened before Yuuei. And I'll make my decision based on that and a future conversation with him. But it has nothing to do with you, Problem Child. This is something that Bakugou will have to handle on his own."

There was a moment of silence between the two of them for a moment as Midoriya just stared at the table and Shouta studied Midoriya. The boy seemed a little lighter than he had when he had walked into the office. Like a weight had been lifted from his

shoulders. “The boy who sent the letter,” Midoriya finally said, voice scratchy from holding back tears. “His name’s Yagami Enji. He was one of Kacchan’s friends back in middle school. He has a quirk where he can make his fingers and nails grow really long. He used,” Midoriya’s breath hitched but he continued on, wiping at his eyes firmly, “he used to trip me up sometimes with his fingers. Knock my things out of my arms. Scratch me during class. He, he liked putting red spider lilies on my desk after the news of a quirkless suicide hit. I mean, everyone did. It was just a thing, I guess. Everyone did it. But he was the one who did it the most. He left me a bouquet of them once after there was news of a group of quirkless kids going together.”

The spark *glowed.*

“That was wrong of them,” Shouta said firmly. He took in this boy in front of him and wondered how many red spider lilies he had gotten over the years. Wondered how many had tried to put a stop to it. Wondered if Bakugou went along with the rest and laid a flower on Midoriya’s desk and how he would justify himself to Shouta if he ever had. “Did your teachers ever do anything to stop them?” He let out a sigh when Midoriya shook his head. Not surprising, considering the boy had been quirkless.

There had been a quirkless girl in Shouta’s elementary school. Only for a month. She had transferred just a month after the school year started. But Shouta remembered her name clearly because the kids in her year, two years below Shouta’s, had called her, “Sakura, the vestigial girl.”. The girl that was a leftover thing from an era that people liked to pretend didn’t exist. Shouta had glared at anyone who used that name in his hearing and had hissed at the people in her class to stop bothering her. Sakura had looked at him like he had been the first one who had ever stood up for her. He probably had been. They had never spoken but she used to sit at the empty table that he ate lunch at. No one wanted to mess with the future villain and that meant that Sakura never had to worry about being targeted at lunch. But Shouta hadn’t been there all the time and he had been too awkward and nervous about reaching out to make friends to try with Sakura. He should’ve. He really should’ve. She had transferred when a boy a year above her had pushed her down the stairs. Shouta had found her, sobbing and alone with a broken leg and a boot print pressed into her face. He had rushed to grab a teacher who had just sighed when she saw Sakura, tsking and asking what she had done to herself this time. The teacher didn’t believe Shouta or Sakura when they told her what happened or took any notice of the boot print. Shouta had gotten detention for being out of class while Sakura had

been shipped off to the nearest clinic that treated Quirkless people. She had never returned to that school.

If Midoriya's teachers had been anything like Shouta's, like Sakura's, then it wasn't a surprise that he didn't trust teachers.

"He wants to meet with me," Midoriya continued, holding out the envelope with a shaking hand. Shouta took it, placing it to the side to read later on. "He said that he saw me at the sports festival and wants to meet up again." Tears leaked out of Midoriya's eyes and he whispered out a broken, "He apologized. Said he was sorry for *teasing* me when we were in middle school." Midoriya choked on a sob and he pushed his fist into his mouth. He pulled it back after a moment and looked at Shouta pleadingly. "I don't want to see him, Sensei. He says that he'll be visiting town soon with a bunch of other kids from another hero school. He's in the, the support department and they're coming here for a competition or something, but I don't want to see him, *please Sensei."*

Shouta stood up, moving forward and crouching in front of Midoriya, taking both of his hands in his own. "You won't have to," he said firmly, squeezing his Problem Child's hands tightly. "I'll make sure that he doesn't make it on campus." Yagami Enji. Another person for Shouta to investigate. "I'll file the paperwork today that'll make it so he won't be allowed on Yuuei property under any circumstances. I promise, Problem Child, you won't have to see him as long as you go to school here." He squeezed Midoriya's hands tightly again before softening his tone. "Breathe with me, kid. You need to calm down a bit. Follow me. We'll breathe together." He took in an exaggerated breath and a spark of pride grew alongside the spark of anger at how Midoriya immediately tried to copy him.

His Problem Child was a good kid.

They stayed like that for a few minutes until Midoriya's breathing had evened out. The kid was a bit more relaxed now, his hands limp in Shouta's and shoulders missing the usual line of tension that ran through them. Shouta gave Midoriya's hands one more squeeze before pulling back, placing his hands on his knees. "There's going to be a few things we'll have to discuss further in the future," he said gently. "About your quirk, for one. About life before Yuuei." About his home life too, but Shouta didn't say that. He had only met Midoriya Inko once and while she had seemed like a kind woman, Shouta knew the statistics. 95% of Quirkless kids grew up in abusive or neglectful homes. It was possible that Problem Child was part of

the 5% who didn't but Shouta couldn't leave that up to chance. Midoriya showed signs of an abused child and maybe it came solely from the school system. But Shouta had to check. He had to be sure. For now, Midoriya was safe in the dorms for now and until Shouta was sure nothing was happening with his mother, Class 1-A would be having mandatory weekend training sessions that would stop any trips home. "But for now, I think you need time to rest and calm down. I know that you usually have study sessions with your friends after classes, but I'd suggest skipping this one if you're feeling like you need time alone."

Midoriya wiped at his eyes and managed a weak smile. "I told Todoroki that I'd be talking to you today. I didn't give him any details, but I think he knew that it was going to, um, be heavy." That explained the look Todoroki had given Shouta before leaving the classroom. "W-we're gonna have tea in his room when I get back. And he said that he'd make katsudon for the two of us that should be ready by the time I get back to the dorms. He said that he'd explain to the others that we'd be having alone time and not to bother us." He hesitated before saying softly but firmly, "I'm going to tell him too. About One for All. About being quirkless. Everything. Not today but I am going to tell him. I trust him."

Shouta only nodded. "Good. You need people in your corner, Problem Child. If you trust Todoroki then there's no reason why you shouldn't tell him." He softened his voice again. "After all, it's your quirk. Your secret. You chose who gets to hear it. No one else. *You.*"

Midoriya shuddered at that but his smile grew a little. "Thank you, Sensei. I'm . . . I'm glad that I told you all of this." There was something like shock in the boy's voice. Like he was surprised that trusting an adult, a teacher, had actually turned out in his favour for once. Shouta would have to take care of this tentative trust, make sure that blossom into something stronger than the fragile little seedling it was right now. But it was a start. Midoriya had done all that he could by reaching out for out. It was Shouta's turn to reciprocate. To prove that he was worthy of this trust.

"And I'm glad that you told me all of it," Shouta said, his lips twisting up into a rare smile. "As I said, we'll be revisiting this topic later on. I'll be speaking to All Might later today about this and your quirk." And ask him how many bones Midoriya would have to had to break before Yagi would have come to him and told him the truth. "There are going to be a few things that I'm going to insist on, quirk counselling and extra lessons that you'll be taking alongside a few

other of your peers." Therapy as well. But Midoriya had been pushed enough today and Shouta didn't want to introduce anything too new and scary to the boy until he had time to calm down more. "I'll be suggesting a few things, people that would be safe to tell the secret to and who would help you." Hizashi was right at the top of the list, as far as Shouta was concerned. His husband knew what it was like to have a quirk that hurt the user's body and was a bitch and a half to learn to control. Hound Dog was another, if only to make therapy easier for everyone concerned. "But ultimately that'll be up to you. I meant it when I said that you decide who knows about this and who doesn't."

"Thank you, Sensei," Midoriya said, wiping at the tear tracks on his cheeks weakly. "Thank you." He stood up and pulled his backpack up clumsily on his shoulders. Shouta stood up and helped him, causing a pink blush to crawl up his cheeks. The boy ducked and murmured out another thanks before turning to leave. But he paused just as he reached the door and half turned, just enough that the boy could see him. "Sensei? Can I ask you a question before I leave?"

Shouta tilted his head. "Of course."

"Do you think that I could've been a hero even without taking the quirk?"

Ah. Shouta's expression softened. He thought of Midoriya's massive heart, his endless determination, and his analytical mind. He answered honestly. "Midoriya, even without a quirk, I'm sure you would've wormed your way into my class somehow. Maybe you wouldn't have been able to pass the entrance exam. That's not a slight against you. I didn't pass the entrance exam." He arched an eyebrow at how Midoriya turned to him fully with a shocked expression. "Midoriya, what the *hell* could I have done against robots when I was your age? Nothing. I failed the entrance exam and fought tooth and nail to win the sports festival. It was only then when I was allowed into the heroics department. It was quirkest, something I'm sure you know and something that I and a few select others have been working to fix. But there are a multitude of ways to get into the heroics department and the entrance exam and the sports festival are only two of them. I have no doubt in my mind that you would've found them and gone after them with everything in you." One of the ways was for a teacher to be impressed by a student and train them for a specialty-made transfer exam. It was what Shouta was doing with Shinsou now. He thought of meeting a quirkless boy who was willing to fight tooth and nail to get what the world was more than willing to deny him for

something that he couldn't help. He thought of how Midoriya fought for everything that he had gotten so far with steel in his spine and knew that he would've had two personal students if he had met Midoriya under those circumstances. "So, yes, Problem Child, even without taking the quirk, I think that you could've been a hero."

For a second, Shouta thought that Midoriya was about to cry again. His lips wobbled and tears shone in his eyes. But then he smiled at Shouta, the tears there but not falling. "Thank you, Sensei. I think I needed to hear that." And then he left the office, closing the door with a click behind him. Shouta waited until the sounds of Midoriya's shoes clicking against the floor faded away before letting out a deep breath.

This entire situation was complex. Shouta had many things to do now because of what his Problem Child had told him. Persona non Grata paperwork. Investigations into Yagami Enji, Aldera Middle school. An investigation into Bakugou Katsuki and a look to see if the boy deserved to be in the heroics department, if he would be put in Hizashi's 1-C class in General Education, or if he would be kicked out altogether. A talk to All Might about Midoriya and his failure in his handling of the situation. An investigation into Midoriya's homelife to make sure that there was no abuse going on. And more that would have to addressed as well.

But, Shouta was going to take a minute to breathe. Midoriya had come to him, asked for help, and trusted an adult to do something that he couldn't do himself. For now, that was enough.

Works inspired by this one

(Podfic) The Spark by ShadeCrawler by Madi_Shea

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!